

Airport Permitting

California Airport Definitions

As described in CCR 3527, nonexempt airports in California fall into three categories, Public-Use, Special-Use, and Personal-Use. These airports are defined as:

Public-Use - An airport that is open for aircraft operations to the general public and is listed in the current edition of the FAA's Airport/Facility Directory.

Special-Use - An airport not open to the general public, access to which is controlled by the owner in support of commercial activities*, public service operations and/or personal use.

*Commercial activities offer a facility, service or commodity for sale, hire, profit, or any other business purpose. Examples of commodities for sale are: food, lodging, entertainment, real estate, petroleum products, parts and equipment. Examples of services are: flight training, charter flights, maintenance, aircraft storage and tie-down. Examples of a facility used for a business purpose are: facility used for the transport of persons for a corporate business purpose and a facility used to transport persons for compensation or hire.

Personal-Use - An airport limited to the noncommercial activities of an individual owner or family and occasional invited guests.

Public-Use and Special-Use airports normally require a State Airport Permit, unless exempted as "grandfathered" or otherwise. Personal-Use airports may be exempt from State Airport Permit requirements, provided they are located in unincorporated areas and also meet the requirements of Article 5 of the CCR (see below).

Under Article 5 of the CCR (CCR 3560), many design elements of Personal-Use airports are at the discretion of the owner. However, the Department requires at least the following:

- 1) A runway length and width adequate to enable aircraft to operate safely, considering airport location and the performance data of the most demanding aircraft to utilize the airport.
- 2) The ends of each runway shall be at least 200 feet from the airport property line.
- 3) The distance from the runway centerline to the property line of another owner shall be at least 50 feet.
- 4) The distance from the taxiway centerline to the property line of another owner shall be at least 50 feet.
- 5) If the airport is identifiable as an airport from the air, it shall be marked with the letter "R" in accordance with CCR 3543(a). If an airport lighting system is installed, it shall illuminate the required markings. The Department shall determine whether or not the airport is identifiable from the air if there is a dispute.